



The President's Daily Brief

October 7, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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USSR

Soviet Premier Kosygin and Foreign Minister Gromyko have expressed themselves recently on the status of relations with the US. An article by Gromyko appeared in the current issue of the party's theoretical journal Kommunist and probably is a warm-up for the coming party congress. Kosygin's remarks were made during meetings last week with Sargent Shriver and Guyford Stever.

Gromyko touches most of the bases in his article regarding relations with the US, including a favorable reference to General Secretary Brezhnev's coming visit to Washington. Gromyko, however, seems to give somewhat greater weight to negative aspects of US-Soviet ties. He refers to the fact that trade relations are still not normal, and goes on to voice uncertainty about whether the "circles" that determine US policy will be able to get economic relations with the USSR squared away. Gromyko also introduces a new theme in claiming that US-Soviet relations are being complicated by the "notorious" actions of the US in "some" parts of the world.

The Soviet foreign minister says that the USSR will continue to follow the line of improving Soviet-US relations, but hastens to add that, as before, the USSR will not waive its legitimate interests or those of its allies and friends. The sharp thrust to Gromyko's remarks seems to be designed to tell the party faithful that the Soviet Union is still tough and vigilant.

Kosygin, meanwhile, told Sargent Shriver last week that over the next five years the USSR, in addition to grain purchases, hopes to raise the level of trade with the US to an average of \$2 billion annually. Kosygin expressed willingness to conclude 5, 10, or 15 year trade agreements with the US on both grain and oil, although he criticized as outmoded any direct linkage between the two commodities. He said the USSR is interested in obtaining \$3 billion in Eurodollar credits over the next five years to finance expansion of oil and gas production.

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Kosygin also endorsed an increase in scientific and technological exchanges, a subject to which he returned the following day in a conversation with Guyford Stever, who was in Moscow to help chair the fourth session of the joint commission for scientific and technical cooperation. The Soviet premier stressed that the time had come to proceed to specific joint research and development programs. He suggested the US and USSR select two or three large projects to demonstrate to the public the tangible benefits of bilateral cooperation. He assured Stever that the Soviet government would be willing to allocate the necessary resources, observing that a few such projects would be useful in building trust between the two nations. His proposals included joint construction of advanced metallurgical plants and hospitals, and joint solution of a transportation problem in each country.

Kosygin frequently has spoken on behalf of greater East-West economic cooperation. His reiteration of this theme at this time implies that the USSR intends to continue to pursue a foreign policy compatible with expanded scientific, technical, and economic cooperation, despite a variety of bilateral problems.

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SYRIA

President Asad, in another sharp attack on the Sinai agreement, asserted yesterday that Syria would not engage in any further negotiations for a Golan Heights accord unless concurrent negotiations on the Palestinian question are held with the Palestine Liberation Organization. This appears to represent a serious change in Syria's negotiating position and all but rules out any chance of the US getting talks going soon between Syria and Israel.

Syrian propaganda attacks on the Sinai accord over the past week have been leading toward this shift. [redacted] Syrian officials [redacted] indicated [redacted] that Syria was no longer in any hurry to recover a few more kilometers on the Heights, and needs something for the Palestinians as well before an agreement with Israel can be politically acceptable.

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This is the first time, however, that Asad has insisted in public on a direct link between Syrian-Israeli negotiations and the Palestinian problem. Indeed, it marks a sharp change from early last month when the Syrians were telling US officials in Damascus to disregard Syrian criticism of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement because these attacks were largely for domestic consumption.

It is not clear what triggered Asad's about-face. He may have concluded from Foreign Minister Khaddam's talks with Secretary Kissinger last week in New York that there is no hope of rapid progress in negotiations. Asad may, therefore, believe he cannot afford to settle for what the Israelis are willing to offer without suffering acute public embarrassment and strong attacks from the Iraqis and his domestic opponents.

It is not certain what position Damascus will now take toward the renewal of the mandate of the UN forces on the Golan Heights, which expires on November 30. Asad may still find some way of rationalizing an extension of the mandate in order to allow the US more time to deal with the Palestinian issue. In the meantime, Syria is likely to redouble its efforts to obtain the support of other Arabs for its negotiating position.

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PORTUGAL

A Communist Party decision to support a rebellious left-wing military unit in Lisbon could foreshadow the party's withdrawal from the government. The Communists apparently believe that the political tide in Lisbon is turning against Azevedo and his Socialist-dominated government and they want to improve their relations with the left-wing extremists who oppose him.

The Communists and extreme leftists have cooperated occasionally in the past, but the leftist fringe groups have generally sharply criticized the Communists for their willingness to work with the new government. Until now, the Communists have taken a neutral position in the government's struggle with the extremists in order to avoid an open break with the newly formed Azevedo government. Communist-controlled unions have called a strike of 250,000 steel workers for today, apparently in support of the rebellious troops.

President Costa Gomes, who returned from his state visit to Moscow on Sunday, is apparently supporting Azevedo's strong actions to reassert military discipline.

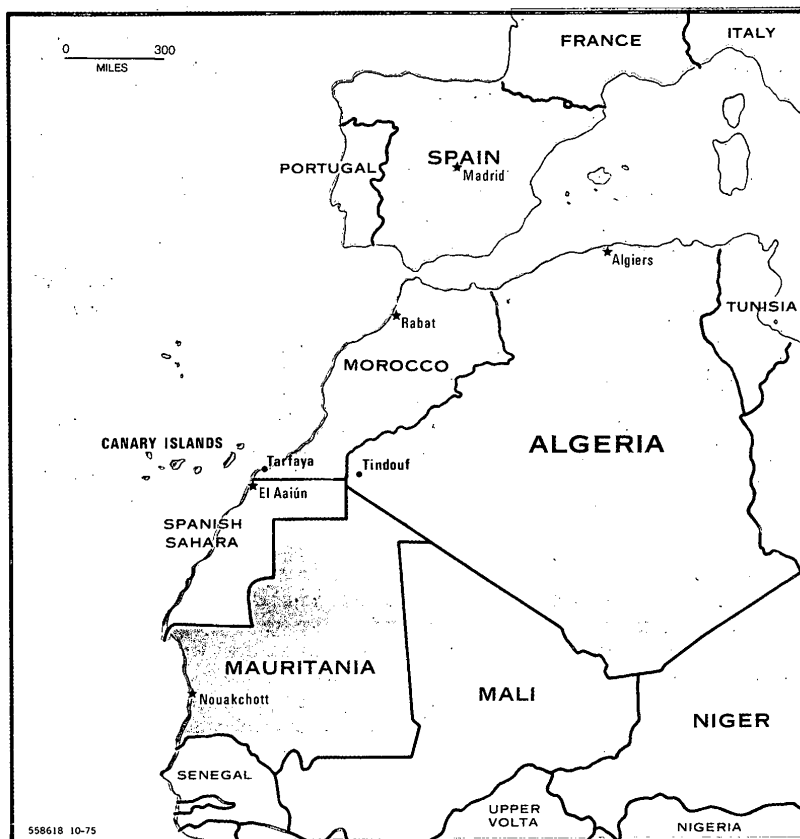
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Azevedo has had only limited success in his efforts to form a loyal military intervention force that could counterbalance General Carvalho's internal security command.

In Lisbon 10,000 demonstrators, including about 1,000 soldiers and sailors from several leftist units in the capital region, responded last night to the Communist-backed appeal to show support for the Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment's defiance of the government attempts to bring it to heel. The rebellious artillerymen have mounted anti-tank and machine guns outside their barracks, claiming that government leaders are trying to "annihilate" the regiment.

Thousands also demonstrated in Porto last night to protest the government's decision Saturday to disband a military transportation unit there. The demonstration in Porto--where there have been almost continuous disturbances since Saturday--was preceded by a rally in support of the government by about 5,000 people, led by the centrist Popular Democratic Party. The Popular Democrats, along with the Socialists, have called for another rally in Porto today.

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NOTES

Morocco reportedly has moved some military forces away from the Tarfaya area near the border with Spanish Sahara. [redacted]

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[redacted] the troops began moving over the weekend, and appeared to be "redeploying on" the Algerian border. Madrid does not believe that the move is a maneuver to cover an imminent attack by the Moroccans into Spanish Sahara.

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If the troops are in fact moving, they could be going to the central Spanish Saharan border area to strengthen forces there, rather than to the Algerian border; a move by Morocco against Spanish Sahara in either the central or eastern border area would involve less risk for Rabat than one near the coast, where most of the Spanish forces are concentrated. [redacted]

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[redacted] West German [redacted]

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Yugoslav Premier Bijedic's visit to China began on a sour note yesterday when Soviet Ambassador Tolstikov led a walkout at the official reception.

All envoys of the East European Communist countries except the Romanian ambassador left after Chinese First Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping said, "...the most dangerous source of war is the super-power that is most zealous in preaching peace." The walkout yesterday was significant because Teng's anti-Soviet statement did not go beyond language he had used at the recent reception for North Vietnamese party chief Le Duan; Tolstikov did not leave on that occasion. The Soviet's action probably was intended as a demonstration of pique with the Yugoslavs and the Romanians, who have been flaunting their ties with Peking.

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